

SOCIAL JUSTICE AT ASALH

Toolkit

**Teaching Black History
as Resistance**



*Association for the Study of
African American Life and History*





INTRO LETTER

Welcome to Social Justice at ASALH!

We are so happy that you are engaged in social justice, and we hope this Social Justice Toolkit will provide a platform for expanding your thoughts and knowledge and spreading this knowledge throughout your community.

The mission of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) is to promote, research, preserve, interpret, and disseminate information about Black life, history, and culture to the global community.

With this Toolkit and the offerings on the Social Justice at ASALH webpage, <https://asalh.org/social-justice/>, ASALH is providing a renewed focus on social justice through the lens of Black History. Since the time of its founding in 1915 by historian Carter G. Woodson, the Father of Black History, ASALH has operated from the premise that racial discrimination must be fought not only through legal suits in the courtroom and marches in the street, but also through presenting historical knowledge inside and outside of the classroom.

We publish this final version of the Social Justice Toolkit to mark ASALH's 108th Conference in Jacksonville, Florida, September 20-24, 2023. There is an urgency to this kit as local, state, and national activists are fighting for the teaching of the Black experience. Florida is the epicenter. We are here to stand up to the fascist turn that targets Black, Brown, and Indigenous people as well as members of the LGBTQI community and the books they read and write. This Toolkit is especially useful to those who want to resist this turn.

In partnership with Howard University and sponsored by the Mellon Just Futures Initiative, Social Justice at ASALH is a cross-organizational, cross-institutional, interdisciplinary initiative that includes fellowships, workshops, and outreach materials on social justice. Social Justice at ASALH focuses on the community, bringing practical knowledge and theories, learned through the lived experience of activists and oppressed groups, that are often overlooked or discounted inside the academy.

The free offerings from Social Justice at ASALH present a unique opportunity to advance the ASALH and Howard University Social Justice Consortium goal of broad public audience participation in social justice.

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HOW TO USE THE TOOLKIT

This Toolkit is organized so that any community member can lead discussions on racial and social justice issues. There are three sets of user-friendly guides organized as Social Justice 101, 102, 103, and 104.

Each guide introduces terminology in practical and theoretical ways to illustrate how racism and the struggle against racism have historically and contemporaneously operated in the United States. Each guide also introduces community members to important social movements and individuals important to Black History and Black resistance and is aimed at training the trainers.

Social Justice 101 is entitled **Understanding the Language of Racial Oppression** and its aim is to define phenomena such as white privilege, cultural appropriation, and feelings of racial inferiority. **Social Justice 102** is entitled **Understanding the Language of Black Liberation** and focuses on the reality that no oppression goes unchallenged and that Black people in the United States have developed powerful ideological frameworks and resistance movements to confront the dehumanizing impact of racial oppression. **Social Justice 103** is entitled **Understanding the Black Diaspora** and focuses on five themes within the Black Diaspora to bring processes alive in a broader transnational frame that challenge the erasure of experiences, accomplishments, and persistent resistance networks formed by those of African descent. **Social Justice 104** is entitled **Black Resistance Across Time and Space: The Ways and Means of Black Existence** and explores four ways that Black people worldwide have waged resistance. One is Defiance. A second is Psyche Resilience. The third is Community Building, and the fourth is Protest and Petition.

This Kit has an alphabetical **GLOSSARY** that highlights and defines terms, social movements, and key organizers examined in **Social Justice 101, Social Justice 102, Social Justice 103, and Social Justice 104**. Following the **GLOSSARY** there is a set of activities for each guide, containing questions and writing prompts that the leader can use to engage community members in thoughtful and provocative group conversations. Also included for some of the activities are short videos, historical documents, and infographics. The goal of each set of activities is to have each participant feel empowered enough to share and talk about these issues with greater proficiency.

It is important that the leaders familiarize themselves with the **TOOLKIT** first by viewing the webinars organized by ASALH as part of their 2021, 2022, and 2023 annual conferences, entitled **Social Justice 101, Social Justice 102, Social Justice 103, and Social Justice 104**. In these webinars, Dr. Lisa Brock explains in detail each term and why it is important to study and know them. It is recommended that each community member view the appropriate video before participating in the associated workshop. At the end of the **TOOLKIT**, there are links to reference materials that provide useful background to leaders before they do the workshop. Furthermore, there are additional resources and activities provided for community members to use to continue learning about and discussing racial and social justice issues.

It is important for the SJ leaders to view the four webinars in order, if possible, before teaching the toolkit. **Social Justice 101, 102, 103, and 104** do loosely build upon each other. And yet, it should be noted that each **GUIDE** is simply that, a guide. While it is suggested that workshop leaders engage community members with **Social Justice 101** before they do **Social Justice 102, Social Justice 103, and Social Justice 104**, it is not always necessary. Workshop leaders have the freedom to mix and match as they see fit, and/or decide to only use a few of the questions and prompts and not all. They can also amend and add data as they see fit.

We hope that you find this Toolkit useful and engaging in our mutual quest for social justice. It is particularly useful in understanding the struggle to explore, learn, and teach the history of Black and other marginalized peoples, which is and always has been a key part of the struggle for justice.

COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP and MEETING AGREEMENTS

THINK WELL OF EACH OTHER.

We recognize and value that we each enter this experience with the intention of building a shared understanding and goal of moving forward.

BE HERE AND BE PRESENT.

Arrive promptly. Pay active attention to those speaking.

Understand the difference between
INTENT VS. IMPACT.

KEEP CONFIDENTIALITY.
Personal experiences bravely shared stay within the space. Share ideas and concepts only.

ADDRESS THE IDEAS, NOT THE PERSON.

Personalize our statements. We use “I” in dialogue and “we” when formally representing a group.

EXPECT UNFINISHED BUSINESS.
Addressing the issues before us will take concerted effort and time.

SHARE THE SPACE.
Speak Up.
Hold Back.
Be Aware of Time.

AVOID ASSUMPTIONS ASK QUESTIONS.

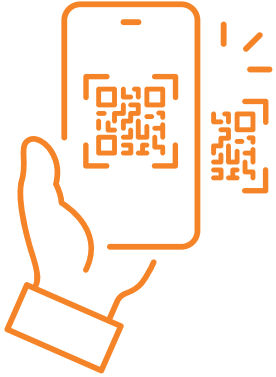
Remember that we all have different experiences. Ask questions or ask someone to give a longer explanation to make sure you understand their point or perspective.

**REACT MINIMALLY,
ACT MAXIMALLY.**
If something triggers an emotion, take a few minutes to gather before responding.

KALAMAZOO COLLEGE

K ARCUS CENTER FOR
SOCIAL JUSTICE LEADERSHIP
More in Four. More in a Lifetime.

HOW TO USE QR CODES IN YOUR TOOLKIT:



WHAT IS A QR CODE?

A QR code is a two-dimensional barcode. QR codes may be used to display text to the user, or to open a URL.

HOW DO I SCAN A QR CODE?

1. Open the Camera app on your phone.
2. Hold your phone so that the QR code appears in view.
3. Tap the notification to open the link associated with the QR code.
4. View page contents.

**SCAN THE CODE TO
THE RIGHT FOR
PRACTICE:**



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ANTI-BLACKNESS:

Based on a belief that Black people are less than human, which systemically shows up as white supremacy, internalized racial superiority, and racism. However, it also shows up among people of color because of internalized racism and white proximity or adjacency.

BLACK EXISTENTIALISM:

Is a school of thought that affirms the humanity of Black people and rejects the colonial and racist attempt to deny this. A contemplation that argues that Black people exist and therefore we must affirm and fight for that right to live into our full capacity. The 1960s statement "I Am a Man" represents this affirmation, as does "Aren't I a Woman" attributed to Sojourner Truth in the 19th century; each validates and captures the essence of existentialism. Like most philosophical theory, it attempts to register a common phenomenon of life as we know it. Lewis Gordon, the most prolific living philosopher on this subject today, argues that Black existentialism is not only existential philosophy produced by Black philosophers but it also addresses the intersection of problems of existence in Black contexts.

THE BLACK RADICAL TRADITION:

A collection of cultural, intellectual, action-oriented work aimed at disrupting social, political, economic, and cultural norms originating in anticolonial and antislavery efforts. This is not simply about Black people being included in white society but about making new societies in which we are not marginal. This tradition is not only resistance against structures rooted in slavery, imperialism, and capitalism, but maintenance of an ontology (cultural traditions, beliefs, values). From ship revolts to maroon communities, from abolition to civil rights, from Black Power to Black Lives Matter, the major goal has to be based on strategic action to maintain (and advance) the dignity and humanity of Black people.

BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS:

Steve Biko's term to describe the importance of validating the Black self through ideological, political, social, and cultural resistance. Similar to the Black Power, Black is Beautiful, and Black Nationalist movements. Black Lives Matter is a recent manifestation of this. Many oppressed groups have developed along similar lines, such as feminist and queer movements.

BLACK FEMINISM & INTERSECTIONALITY:

There has always been Black feminism, but the term *intersectionality* was first coined in 1989 by attorney Kimberlé Crenshaw. It refers to the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage. It emerged in her work on Black women and the courts, when she realized that Black women's gender and issues connected to that identity were ignored by the courts. Black women were seen just as Black and not as women. Since then, the theory has expanded to enable us to see all social identity markers in relation to power and privilege as well as disadvantage and discrimination.

COLORISM:

The notion that the lighter/whiter the better. It is a way that anti-Blackness shows up everywhere, but has a particular meaning in countries that did not apply the one-drop rule to the racial construct and/or had a more porous system of racial categorization, for example, Cuba and the Dominican Republic. It also appears in mannerisms, values, attitudes, and the politics of representation. Michael K. Williams, the recently passed dark-skinned actor, said his Blackness caused him grief growing up even in the Black community of Brooklyn.

COMMUNITY BUILDING:

A group of people having a common history or common social, economic, and political interests who come together to build bonds that are reciprocal and affirming. For Black people, this has been found in the Black church and other forms of spirituality, family reunions, and building sustainable homes and land-bases as well as common commemorations of holidays and memorials.

CRITICAL RACE THEORY (CRT):

Critical race theory is an academic concept that is more than 40 years old. The basic tenets of critical race theory, or CRT, emerged out of a framework for legal analysis in the late 1970s and early 1980s created by legal scholars Derrick Bell, Kimberlé Crenshaw, and Richard Delgado, among others. These scholars examined court case after court case to illustrate that racism played a major role in how courts viewed, adjudicated, and sentenced defendants who were Black as opposed to those who were white. It has currently become a catchall term used by Americans who support racial disparities for all those who desire to teach the true history of the United States or resist contemporary manifestations of racial oppression in the United States, such as the Pulitzer Prize-winning 1619 Project, published in the *New York Times* by Nikole Hannah-Jones. Hannah-Jones begins the history of the United States from the perspective of those Africans who were brought here to be enslaved.

CULTURAL APPROPRIATION:

Involves members of a dominant group exploiting the culture of less privileged groups, with little understanding or acknowledgement of the latter's history, experience, and tradition. Because of white privilege, commercial cultural appropriators profit from the cultural property of others, often without just compensation being given to those to whom it belongs. If the commodification of Black bodies was justified through enslavement, of course Black culture could and would be by extension as well.



DOUBLE CONSCIOUSNESS:

W. E. B. DuBois's term to describe the internal struggle of African Americans to feel good about the "dark self" in a white supremacist world. The notion of a double sight or a "warring of two unreconciled souls" describes how oppressed people are forced to see themselves through the gaze of their oppressor, while trying to be whole and proud with who they are.

DEFIANCE:

The act of openly refusing to obey somebody/something such as unjust laws, policies, or institutions. Black people have defied unjust laws from the moment they were captured and enslaved. Running away was an act of Defiance, as enslavement was the law. Rosa Parks defied segregation laws on the bus in Montgomery. Black Lives Matter organizers have taken over streets without permits or permission. Strikes, union organizing, revolts, uprising, and revolution are also acts of Defiance.

INTERNALIZED RACIST INFERIORITY:

A complex multi-generation socialization process that teaches people of color to believe and accept societal definitions of people of color and to assimilate comfortably into white supremacist frameworks. Frantz Fanon called it a syndrome of the "Native or comprador" in the colonial context.

INTERNALIZED RACIAL SUPERIORITY:

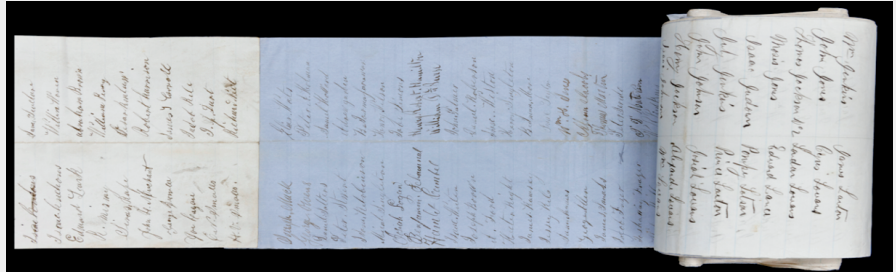
A complex multigenerational socialization process that teaches white people to believe, accept, and live out superior societal definitions of self and to fit into and live out superior societal roles in relationship to people of color. These behaviors define and normalize the race construct and its outcome—white supremacy. Frantz Fanon and Andrea Smith have called it the syndrome of the Settler in a colonial context.

OPPRESSION:

In its traditional usage, *oppression* means the exercise of tyranny by a ruling people. But people are not always oppressed by cruel tyrants. In many cases, historic and systemic laws, policies, and practices can embed unquestioned harmful norms, habits, and symbols. This could mean treating certain groups of people in dehumanizing and violent ways for which there is societal justification and acquiescence (genocide/slavery). But it could also mean denying people language, education, and other opportunities that would make them full partners in society (the demeaning of Black English; Indian boarding schools). Iris Young (1990) says there are five faces of oppression: exploitation (economic), violence (state/extra-state), powerlessness (political/economic), marginalization (segregation/poverty), and cultural imperialism (theft and appropriation).

PETITION:

A petition is normally a written document often signed by many people that asks somebody in a position of authority, or an institution, to do or change something. Petitions serve to illustrate that many people believe in this change at the same time. Petitions against city, state, and national policies are common. There have been many such petitions in Black History during enslavement and after. One of the most extraordinary is a petition submitted by Black South Carolinians addressed to the US Congress at the end of the Civil War. It is followed by individual pages of 3,740 signatures glued end-to-end to form a document that is just over 54 feet in length when fully extended.



POLITICS OF RESPECTABILITY:

First coined by scholar Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, and expanded upon by Melissa Harris Perry, this term refers to attempts by marginalized groups to police the behavior of their own members in an attempt to show that they are “just as cultured/good” as those with privilege and power. White cultural stereotypes such as Blacks being lazy, intellectual inferiority, violence, problematic single-mothered households, etc. are issues that respectability politics critique and blame for problems in the Black community. President Obama used respectability politics during his presidency, when he brought up issues of Black criminality during his speech following the killing of Michael Brown. Women who say women who dress provocatively “deserve what they get” are another example of this.

POST TRAUMATIC SLAVE SYNDROME:

A theory coined by Dr. Joy DeGruy in 2005, after years of research, that explains the etiology of many of the adaptive survival behaviors in African American communities throughout the United States and the Diaspora. It is a condition that exists because of multigenerational oppression of Africans and their descendants resulting from centuries of chattel enslavement, which was predicated on the belief that African Americans were inherently/genetically inferior to whites. This was then followed by institutionalized racism, which continues to perpetuate injury and trauma today.

PROTEST:

Expressing strong dislike of or opposition to something; a statement or an action that demonstrates this opposition. Protest often manifests itself in physically joining with others in a public space to show this dislike, which might be a march or gathering, which is why we call it a “demonstration.” The Civil Rights Movement and the Black Lives Movement are clearly two examples of public protest against racial oppression and police violence against Black people.

PSYCHE RESILIENCE:

The ability of people to recover quickly after something unpleasant, such as shock, injury, trauma, etc. For Black people, living in a world where they have been belittled, oppressed at every turn, and denied full humanity, resilience has been an important tool of resistance. Self-care, Afrofuturism, cultural memory, cultural production, Black joy, reinstating and preserving Black History, and a conscious sense of self-worth are all acts of Psyche Resilience.

RACISM:

Race prejudice + misuse of power by systems, institutions, and people to uphold it.

RACE:

A specious, historically constructed, sociological classification entrenched by Western Europeans during the time of their worldwide expansion of colonialism, capitalism, and slavery (1300-1888) to assign human worth and social status, using themselves as the model of humanity. Emerging first to differentiate the oppressed in Europe, such as in the British use of it to define the Irish during their early conquest of Northern Ireland, it became more commonly used for the purpose of legitimizing white power, white privilege, exploitation, and oppression over conquered people of the global south. There were other stark strata/caste/religious divisions before this, but rarely based on skin color. Race increased as a weapon of power used by emerging nations, economies, and empires of the global north in order to gain access to peoples and resources of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) communities and nations throughout the world.

REPARATIONS:

According to the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America (NCOBRA), founded in 1987, reparations is a process of repairing, healing, and restoring a people injured because of their group identity and in violation of their fundamental human rights by governments, corporations, institutions, and families. Those groups that have been injured have the right to obtain from the government, corporation, institution, or family responsible for the injuries that which they need to repair and heal themselves. In addition to being a demand for justice, it is a principle of international human rights law. As a remedy, it is like the remedy for damages in domestic law that holds a person responsible for injuries suffered by another when the infliction of the injury violates domestic law.

RACIAL CAPITALISM:

Racial capitalism is a concept coined by Cedric J. Robinson in his book *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*, published in 1983. It describes the process of extracting social and economic value through super-exploitation of persons of color and their lands and resources. This happened largely through the simultaneous emergence of capitalism, colonialism, enslavement, and Western European expansion into the Americas and the global south. Robinson, in contrast to both his predecessors and successors, theorized that all capitalism was inherently racial capitalism, and racialism is present in all layers of capitalism's socioeconomic stratification. In fact, he states that capital "can only accumulate by producing and moving through relations of severe inequality among human groups." Therefore, for capitalism to survive, it must exploit and prey upon the "unequal differentiation of human value."

UBUNTO:

I am because we are! To love and be in relation with family/community is to be human!

WHITENESS:

The normalization of a white racial identity throughout the Americas that created a culture where nonwhite persons are seen as inferior or abnormal. This white-dominant culture also operates as a social mechanism that grants privileges to white people, since they can navigate society both by feeling "normal" and by being viewed and treated as "normal." They also have the privilege of not "seeing race" should they choose not to, while BIPOCs (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) do not have that choice.

WHITE SUPREMACY:

Based on the ideological belief that European and white intellectual, political, and historic contributions to global humanity are superior to those of people of color—so much so that they have become universal. It is so "normalized" that in the words of Michel Foucault its "power is everywhere, diffused and embodied in discourse, knowledge and regimes of truth."

THE WHITE SAVIOR INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX (WSIC):

A concept first coined by writer Teju Cole in 2012. In a series of tweets, which were later published in *The Atlantic*, he critiqued filmmaker Jason Russell for the release of his film *Kony 2012*. In the film, white Americans are encouraged to start a campaign and/or go to Uganda to capture the notorious General Joseph Kony, known for leading vicious military campaigns in Central Africa. As soon as it was released, the entire premise was rejected by Ugandan journalists and activists who argued that they did not need or want the world's "help" with Kony. Cole cited a long history of white Western meddling in Africa under the guise of helping, even when it is not asked for or wanted. This is different than solidarity, which works in concert with people's struggles and under their leadership. The WSIC, instead, maintains the power relationship between the West and African countries under the guise of helping the less fortunate. This was especially evident in this case, as Russell was known in Uganda as a meddler and he had been told that his efforts were not wanted.

GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER QUESTIONS #1

Choose a few questions to discuss with your partner or group.

Given the choice of anyone in the world, whom would you want as a dinner guest?

Before making a telephone call, do you ever rehearse what you are going to say? Why?

Would you like to be famous? In what way?

What would constitute a "perfect" day for you?

If you were able to live to the age of 90 and retain either the mind or body of a 30-year-old for the last 60 years of your life, which would you want?

If you could wake up tomorrow having gained any one quality or ability, what would it be?

When did you last sing to yourself? To someone else?



SOCIAL JUSTICE 101:

UNDERSTANDING THE LANGUAGE OF RACIAL OPPRESSION

CURRICULUM SUMMARY

Too often language laden with history is either misunderstood or used problematically. Based on the presentations curated during Social Justice Workshop Wednesdays, this curriculum aims to give participants a general understanding of basic concepts, terminology, and narratives of racial oppression. The goal is to tether language and theory to the many ways in which racial oppression occurs in everyday life in the United States. This objective will be achieved through the activities of reading, discussion, reflection, and debate as well as written responses to prompts.

An illustration of a person with dark skin and short dark hair, wearing a teal long-sleeved shirt. They are holding a white rectangular sign with both hands. The sign has the text 'SOCIAL JUSTICE 101' in blue, bold, sans-serif font. The background of the entire page is a solid blue color. At the bottom, there is a black and white photograph of a group of African American people, including men, women, and children, standing and sitting in front of a row of small, simple houses. A dirt road runs through the scene, and a factory with smoking chimneys is visible in the distance on the left.

**SOCIAL
JUSTICE
101**

TOOL #1

SOCIAL JUSTICE 101: UNDERSTANDING THE LANGUAGE OF RACIAL OPPRESSION

1) Each participant should **WATCH Workshop Wednesdays: Understanding the Language of Racial Oppression** before they attend the workshop.

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2) Have your community members **READ Slave Law in Colonial Virginia: A Timeline**. Give them 10 or 15 minutes. Ask them to pick out one law and have them link it to one of the terms in the Glossary, such as *white supremacy*, *white privilege*, *racism*, etc., on the following lines. Have them share what they wrote.

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3) After reading together the definitions of *race*, *racism*, and *colorism* from the Glossary, pose this prompt to community members, having them **WRITE** in the space below. Give 5-10 minutes. Have them share what they wrote.

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PROMPT

Given that white supremacy has impacted Black people and white people alike, its origins are quite complicated, emerging slowly over time. Ask your community members to respond to one of the following two questions:

- 1) Can Black people today be racist against white people? Why or why not?
- 2) Share a personal experience of colorism in your family, school, community, church, or social movements.

4) After having your community members **READ** Peggy McIntosh's **White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack**, ask them to respond to the following prompt: If you are white, do you feel you are privileged? Why or why not? If you are a person of color, have you experienced bias when shopping, at school, or in your place of employment? If so, share an experience.

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5) **SCREEN The Day Beyoncé Turned Black.** Ask your community members to link three of the terms in the Glossary to something happening in the video, and then have them share. After they share, you can point out that the normalization of whiteness and white supremacy is so twisted that for some, to perceive a Black person as normal or equal, they must codify them as white.

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6) **READ** together the definition of *internalized racial superiority* from the Glossary and share with your community members a paragraph (of your choosing) from Jean-Paul Sartre's preface to Frantz Fanon's **The Wretched of the Earth**. Ask them to write a response, using internalized racial superiority and/or racial inferiority in their response.

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7) **SCREEN A Girl Like Me** (2007), directed by Kiri Davis. Have your community members write a short five-line poem on Black people's struggle with their skin color, hair, etc. If you need a definition of a poem, you can look it up.

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8) **SCREEN Don't Cash Crop on My Cornrows** (2015), produced by Amandla Stenberg, and look at the definition of *cultural appropriation* from the Glossary. Ask your community members to respond to the following prompt. After the discussion, you can raise the importance of power, permission, honor, paying the producer, class, racism, and colonialism.

If Black people can dance ballet and sing opera, why can't non-Black people produce hip hop? Discuss and debate the challenges, complexities, and necessity of claiming cultural appropriation.

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9) Allow community members time to **READ** the short version of **Five Faces of Oppression** by Iris Young (2010). Have them choose one to write about. Have them share what they wrote.

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10) Culmination Activity Take-Away: Create an art piece, a song, a poem, or an essay inspired by something you learned today.

NOTES

SOCIAL JUSTICE 102:

UNDERSTANDING THE LANGUAGE OF BLACK LIBERATION

CURRICULUM SUMMARY

Based on the presentations curated during Social Justice Workshop Wednesdays, this curriculum aims to give participants the ability to demonstrate a solid understanding of some of the most well-known and current terms, concepts, analysis, and narratives of Black liberation. The goal: to historicize and put language and theory to the many ways that Black people have struggled for liberation. This goal will be achieved through reading, discussion, reflection, and debate as well as written responses to prompts.



TOOL #2

SOCIAL JUSTICE 102: UNDERSTANDING THE LANGUAGE OF BLACK LIBERATION

1) Each community member should **WATCH Workshop Wednesdays: Understanding the Language of Black Liberation** before they attend the workshop.



2) **SCREEN** Ruth Gilmore Wilson, **Geographies of Racial Capitalism**. Afterwards: Have participants write a personal story of how racial capitalism has impacted their opportunities (good and bad) in life.



3) **READ** together **Boukman's Prayer**, and ask the participants to write about this in two ways. Have they heard of it before? If not, why do they think they have never been taught this, and why did Dr. Brock call the Haitian Revolution "the Pan African moment"?

BOUKMAN'S PRAYER

"The god who created the earth; who created the sun that gives us light. The god who holds up the ocean; who makes the thunder roar. Our God who has ears to hear. You who are hidden in the clouds; who watch us from where you are. You see all that the white has made us suffer. The white man's god asks him to commit crimes. But the god within us wants to do good. Our god, who is so good, so just, He orders us to revenge our wrongs. It's He who will direct our arms and bring us the victory. It's He who will assist us. We all should throw away the image of the white men's god who is so pitiless. Listen to the voice for liberty that speaks in all our hearts."

Given by Dutty Boukman, August 14, 1791

4) **READ** together the definition of *the Black Radical Tradition*. Ask community members to respond to this prompt: Given your interests, desires, and skill set, what would be an emancipatory project for you and/or your community? How would it link to the Black Radical Tradition?

5) Have participants **READ** **Black Women in Black Power** and choose one sentence to write about. They should include the sentence at the beginning of their piece and then analyze what it means to them.

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6) After sharing the definition of *intersectionality*, community members should **EXAMINE** the following infographic, write about what they think are the major identity markers that have impacted their lives, and discuss the power dynamics with each.

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7) **SCREEN** **Post Traumatic Slave Disorder** (2016) by Dr. Joy DeGruy and have each community member respond to this prompt: Can you identify trauma in your community? If so, how?

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8) **READ** together the Glossary definition of *reparations*. Show Amiri Baraka, **Why Is We Americans** (2010). Ask community members to respond in writing to this prompt:

What kind of reparation would you develop locally and/or on a national scale for Black Americans?

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9) As a take-away, community members should **VIEW** the documentaries **Slavery by Another Name** (PBS 2012) and **13th** (2017) on their own, and bring a photo of a member of their family or someone they know who has been affected by these histories, policies, and issues.

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NOTES

GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER QUESTIONS #2

Choose a few questions to discuss with your partner or group.

What is the greatest accomplishment of your life?

Is there something that you've dreamed of doing for a long time? Why haven't you done it?

What do you value most in a friendship?

What is your most treasured memory?

Share with your partner an embarrassing moment in your life.

If a crystal ball could tell you the truth about yourself, your life, the future, or anything else, what would you want to know?



SOCIAL JUSTICE 103:

UNDERSTANDING THE BLACK DIASPORA

CURRICULUM SUMMARY

Based on the presentation given at the 107th ASALH Conference held in Montgomery, Alabama, on October 1, 2022, and as a webinar on November 9, 2022, the aim of this curriculum is to have participants demonstrate an understanding of historic themes in the Black Diaspora. While this is a huge topic, the focus is on the following five themes: Africa Before Atlantic Enslavement, Racial Capitalism and the Trade in Black People, Enslavement and Resistance, The US Imperial Project, and Blackness in the Americas. The goal: to bring processes alive in a broader transnational frame that challenge the erasure of Black people's experiences, African accomplishments, and persistent resistance networks formed by those of African descent. This goal will be achieved through reading, discussion, reflection, and debate as well as written responses.



TOOL #3

SOCIAL JUSTICE 103: UNDERSTANDING THE BLACK DIASPORA

All community members should **WATCH Workshop Wednesdays: Understanding the Black Diaspora** in preparation for community gathering. Also, we prefer that folks write their responses first to do their own thinking, then discuss with others.



AFRICA BEFORE ENSLAVEMENT

1) **SHOW** this video about Mansa Musa, one of the wealthiest people who ever lived. Have your community members write a response and then discuss the following questions. Why has this part of African history been erased and/or silenced? And what has been the impact of this erasure on thinking about Africa?

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2) Swahili Coast: **SCREEN** these two videos: **The Swahili Coast | Africa's Great Civilizations** and **World on the Horizon: Swahili Arts Across the Indian Ocean**. Ask your community members to think about and write a response to what African Art History can or should tell us about African History but does not in most museums.

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TOOL #3

SOCIAL JUSTICE 103: UNDERSTANDING THE BLACK DIASPORA

RACIAL CAPITALISM AND SLAVE TRADE

3) **SCREEN** the two short videos Slavery and Capitalism and Ibram X. Kendi, on Capitalism and Racism, and have your community members think about and **WRITE** a response to the following prompt. What has been the role of capitalism in Black struggles for social justice? Can it ever work for justice, if so, how?

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4) **SHARE** the following primary document, "**Excerpt of letter from Nzinga Mbemba to Portuguese King João III,**" in World History Commons, to your community members. Ask them to deeply read this and write down a response to this prompt: What does it tell you about the Kongo Kingdom's social structure as well as the coming of the slave trade?

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TOOL #3

SOCIAL JUSTICE 103: UNDERSTANDING THE BLACK DIASPORA

ENSLAVEMENT AND RESISTANCE

5) **SCREEN** the three short videos on José Aponte and Denmark Vesey for your community. Ask your community members to think about and write a response to this prompt. Who was José Aponte? Who was Denmark Vesey? What do they have in common in the struggle against slavery and for justice? Why do you think their characteristics mattered?

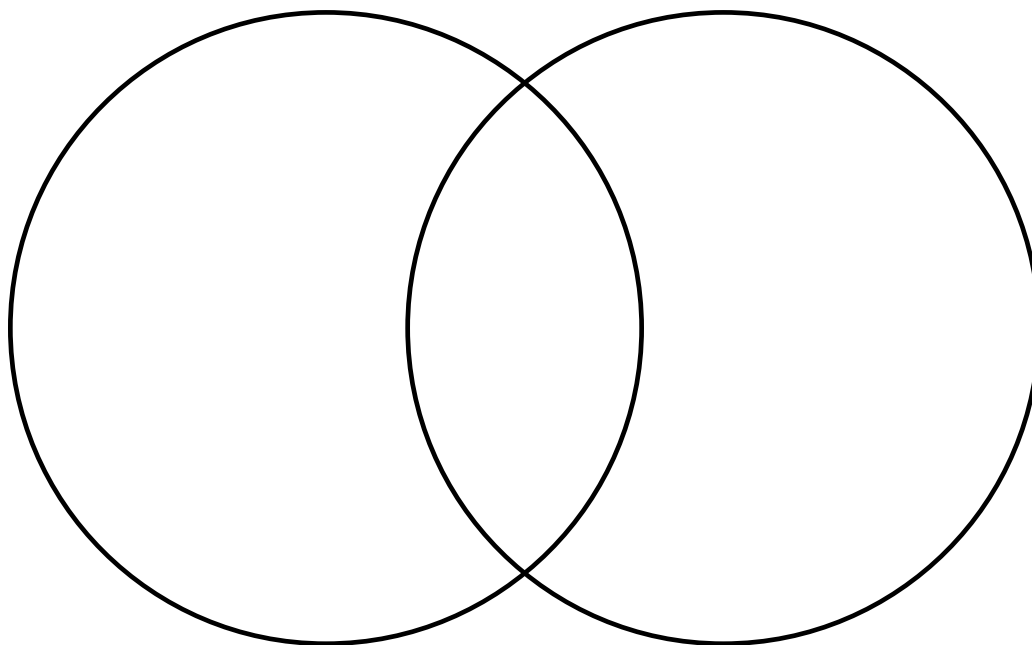
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TOOL #3

SOCIAL JUSTICE 103: UNDERSTANDING THE BLACK DIASPORA

6) Because of the push for visibility of the Black experience, there are modern depictions of enslavement. Most recently, the film **Emancipation** with Will Smith. When the mainstream US deals with issues of the oppressed, there can be problems. Have your community members look at the photo and **READ** the excerpted article from the *Hollywood Reporter*. Ask community members to write what they think, share, and then discuss. Also ask: Is there anything in the Glossary that is reflected here? Did he even consider the impact of this photo on Black people?



THE US IMPERIAL PROJECT

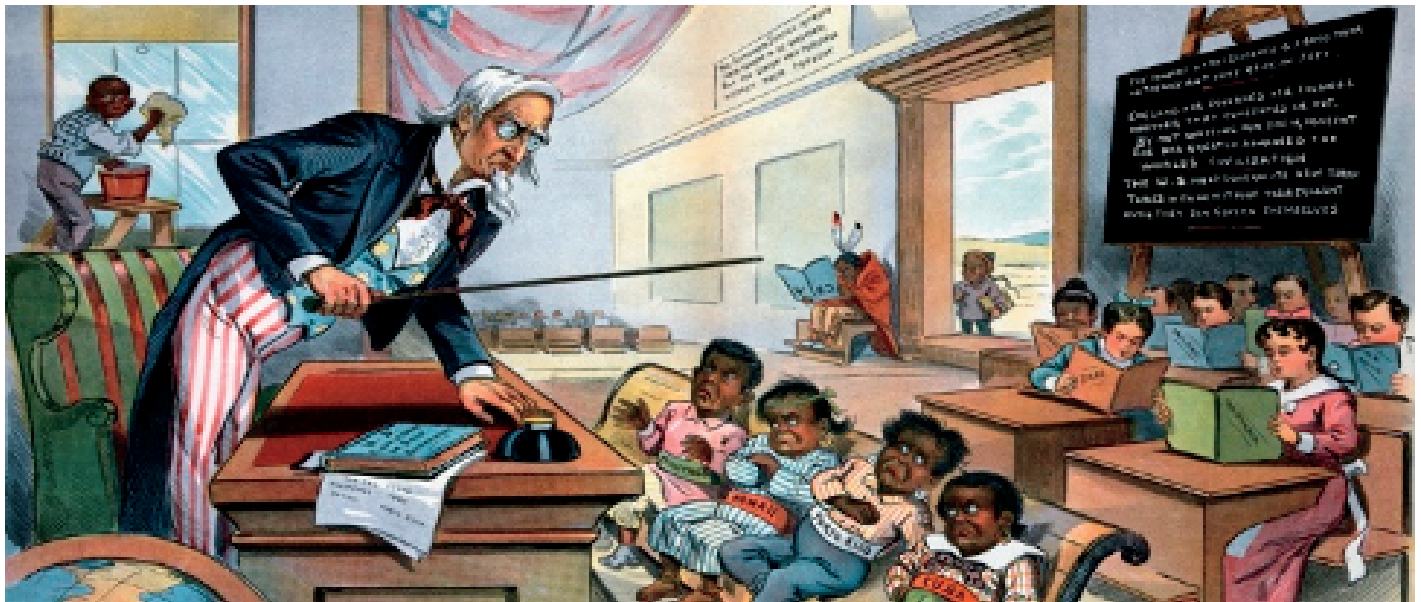
7) Have community members spend some time with the PowerPoint on US military interventions. Ask them to list the ones they know about. What were we taught about them? Which one would you like to know more about and why?



TOOL #3

SOCIAL JUSTICE 103: UNDERSTANDING THE BLACK DIASPORA

8) Bring this political cartoon up on the screen, so that all can be really studied, and the written parts can be seen. Ask the community members to **WRITE** down what they see and how what they see strikes them. What about the notions of “civilization” and “consent”? And then **DISCUSS**.



9) **SCREEN** this brief video on Muhammad Ali's anti-war draft stance. Have community members **WRITE** down a response to this question: Should Blacks participate in US military activities? If so, why or why not?

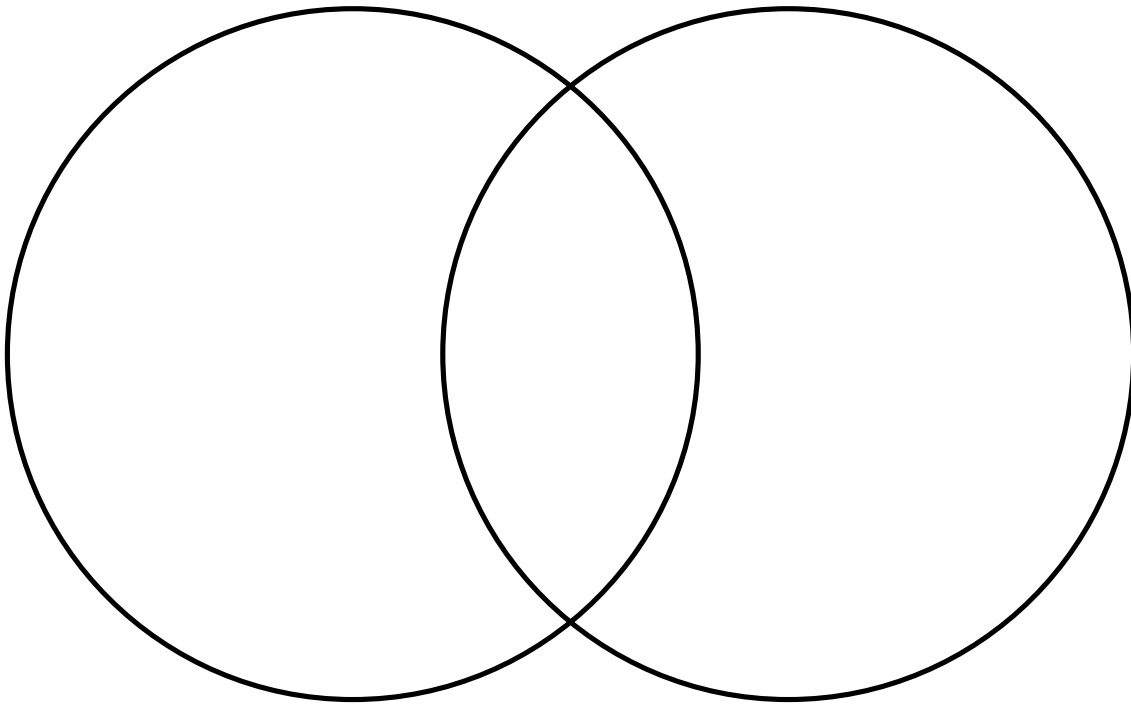


TOOL #3

SOCIAL JUSTICE 103: UNDERSTANDING THE BLACK DIASPORA

BLACKNESS AND ANTI-BLACKNESS IN THE DIASPORA

10) **SCREEN** the video on racism in Latin America. Have your community members write and then discuss anti-Blackness in Latin America and how it compares to racism in the US. What is similar and what is different?



TOOL #3

SOCIAL JUSTICE 103: UNDERSTANDING THE BLACK DIASPORA

11) With your community members, review the following picture and excerpt. Have your community members **WRITE** and then **DISCUSS** the following questions. What is Michaela saying about identity and how it is to come from war? Do Africans who immigrate to the United States have a different sense of Black identity? If so, why?



"If I were born African-American, blackness might mean something more to me. If my native country had not been engaged in a brutal war, and its culture had remained intact, it would mean something more to me. In both of those cases, it would mean a history and culture as well as skin color. However, in my case, blackness just means physical features, such as the color of my skin, the texture of my hair, and the shape of my facial features. But I think that is enough for me to say that I am black and proud of who I am. However, I would hope that I would be proud of who I am, no matter what color I might be, because that's the way I was raised."

Michaela DePrince, American ballet Dancer from Sierra Leone, *Nylon Magazine*, December 4, 2022.



NOTES

SIGNIFICANT FIGURES AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS GLOSSARY

STEPHEN BANTU BIKO (1946-1977):

A thoughtful and radical anti-apartheid activist in South Africa who was among the youth who had been raised nearly all their lives under strict apartheid, which began officially in 1948. Brilliant, he managed to achieve a medical degree despite limitations and became a student leader in the 1960s and 70s. Finding liberal solutions lacking, he founded the Black Consciousness Movement, which would empower and mobilize much of the urban Black population, arguing that true liberation would have to come from the oppressed themselves. In June 1976, after the apartheid government demanded that all classroom instruction be in the language of Afrikaans, which was only spoken by the apartheid leaders of SA and nowhere else in the world, middle school and high school youth took to the streets in what became known as the Soweto Uprising. Biko's philosophy of Black Consciousness was their clarion call. Biko, one year later, was picked up and murdered while in police custody.

COMBAHEE RIVER COLLECTIVE:

A group of Black feminists and lesbians, including Audre Lorde and Barbara Smith, who began working at the intersections of what it meant to fight multiple oppressions at the same time. They were based in Boston. Their name commemorates the military prowess of Harriet Tubman, who on June 2, 1863, led a Union army raid on a Confederate ferry in the Combahee River in South Carolina. She used her military skills to navigate around the Confederate mines placed in the river and successfully rescue more than 700 enslaved persons from the plantations along the river. In 1977, the Collective wrote a famous statement that laid the ground for what is now known as Third Wave feminism, which centered the voices of the most marginalized, not middle-class white women. "We are a collective of Black feminists who have been meeting together since 1974. During that time, we have been involved in the process of defining and clarifying our politics, while at the same time doing political work within our own group and in coalition with other progressive organizations and movements. The most general statement of our politics at the present time would be that we are actively committed to struggling against racial, sexual, heterosexual, and class oppression...to combat the manifold and simultaneous oppressions that all women of color face."



FRANTZ FANON (1925-1961)

Born on the Caribbean Island of Martinique when it was a colony of France. He joined French forces against the Nazis during WWII and ended up in France, where he credentialled in psychiatry. He took his practice to Algeria, where many of his patients were suffering from “alienation” under French colonial rule. He went on to write about Black alienation from the self, becoming a key developer of Black existentialism. He became one of the most important thinkers in Black existential theory in the age of anti-colonial liberation struggle. His work drew on a wide array of poetry, psychology, philosophy, and political theory, and its influence across the global south has been wide, deep, and enduring. In his lifetime, he published two key original long works: *Black Skin, White Masks* (*Peau noire, masques blancs*) in 1952 and *The Wretched of the Earth* (*Les damnés de la terre*) in 1961. Collections of essays, *A Dying Colonialism* (*L’an V de la révolution Algérienne* 1959) and *Toward the African Revolution* (*Pour la révolution Africaine*), posthumously published in 1964, round out a portrait of a radical thinker in motion, moving from the Caribbean to Europe to North Africa to sub-Saharan Africa and transforming his thinking at each stop.

AUDRE LORDE (1934-1992):

Born in New York, the daughter of Caribbean immigrants. She defined herself as a Black feminist, lesbian, poet, mother, and a warrior who dedicated her life, her intellect, and her creative talent to confronting and addressing injustices of racism, sexism, classism, and especially homophobia. She is noted as saying: “If I didn’t define myself for myself, I’d be crunched into other people’s fantasies of me and eaten alive.” She wrote poems and prose and published dozens of important pieces that shaped feminist and lesbian thinking worldwide. Her most well-known collection is *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*. As an internationally recognized activist and artist, Audre Lorde was the recipient of many honors and awards, including the Walt Whitman Citation of Merit, which conferred the mantle of New York State poet laureate for 1991-93. In presenting the citation, Governor Mario Cuomo observed: “Her imagination is charged by a sharp sense of racial injustice and cruelty, of sexual prejudice...She cries out against it as the voice of indignant humanity. Audre Lorde is the voice of the eloquent outsider who speaks in a language that can reach and touch people everywhere.”

LUCY PARSONS (1853-1942):

A leading figure in the American labor movement who fought for class unity and rights among workers. Born a slave near Waco, Texas, she married Albert R. Parsons, who was a white radical. As an integrated couple, they left Texas and moved to Chicago, IL. They quickly became involved in organizing workers’ rights. Thirteen years later, she rose to national fame when she embarked on a speaking tour to raise money for her husband, who was one of nine men tried and sentenced to be executed for “speaking in such a way as to inspire the bomber to violence” following the Haymarket Square Bombing, which killed a Chicago policeman. Albert was executed and Lucy Parsons remained an activist. In 1892, she founded the newspaper *Freedom*, which addressed such issues as labor organizing, lynching, and Black peonage in the South. In 1905 Parsons became the only woman to address the founding convention of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). She was a founder of the International Ladies’ Garment Workers’ Union, and in the early 1930s Parsons joined in the defense of the Scottsboro Boys and Angelo Herndon.

GLORIA ROLANDO (1953-)

She is the most productive and well-known Black filmmaker in Cuba today. She has produced 18 films that address the silences and erasures in Afro-Cuban history. For example, *1912: Breaking the Silence* chronicles the uprising of largely Black workers, peasants, and war veterans who felt betrayed by the racist structure of the new Cuban republic, which had become a neocolonial state of the US. Many of her films also take on the importance of the African Diaspora in Cuba through music, politics, and culture.

OUSMANE SEMBÈNE (1923-2007)

Born in Senegal, he is considered the grandfather of African film. He was a dockworker, a novelist and ultimately found his life's passion in filmmaking. He rejected psychic death by eschewing the Western narrative style to develop a new cinematic aesthetic. He drew from African storytelling traditions, performed in African languages (Wolof, Diola, Bambara), and expressly produced his work for African audiences. He is quoted as saying that before he could begin shooting films in Africa, he had to develop a new camera lens. Lenses had been developed in Europe with European light and European people in mind. He needed a lens that would capture African light and Black people's skin tones. He wrote eight books and made 17 feature films and numerous documentaries.

NGŪGĨ WA THIONG'O (1938-):

Born in Kenya, he is a novelist and postcolonial literary scholar. He has challenged the colonial subjectivity of writing about Africa by pushing the question: Can or should African literature be written in colonial languages? What does one lose when doing so? He is most known for his novels, plays, and nonfiction works, such as *Weep Not Child* (1964), which is considered the first novel published in English by an East African, *A Grain of Wheat* (1967), *Petals of Blood* (1977), *Barrel of a Pen: Resistance to Repression in Neo-Colonial Kenya* (1983), and *Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (1986). He holds 13 honorary degrees, his novels have won nearly 50 awards, and yet he was jailed in Kenya for his challenges to corruption. He has lived most of his life outside of his homeland in exile.

SOWETO UPRISING:

On June 16, 1976, nearly 20,000 students rose in protest—in the densely populated township near Johannesburg known as Soweto—against the introduction of the oppressor's language, Afrikaans, as the only medium of instruction (see Stephen Biko for more information). Influenced by the idea of Black Consciousness, which argued that Black people deserved to be the masters of their own destiny, as well as the South African Student Organization (SASO) founded by Stephen Biko, the students rose. Police were called out and began firing on the students. Many were killed, but they were undeterred. Protests spread throughout the country involving workers, teachers, and everyday people over the next few years. This movement fueled the international anti-apartheid movement, which only got stronger over the next decades until apartheid came to an official end in 1994.

SOCIAL JUSTICE 104:

BLACK RESISTANCE ACROSS TIME AND SPACE: THE WAYS AND MEANS OF BLACK EXISTENCE

CURRICULUM SUMMARY

Based on the webinar of March 15, 2023, and the presentation given at the 108th ASALH Conference held in Jacksonville, Florida, on September 23, 2023, the aim of this curriculum is to have participants demonstrate an understanding of the various ways that Black people in the US and in the Black Diaspora have engaged in resistance. While this is a huge topic, four frameworks of resistance are discussed: Defiance, Community Building, Psyche Resilience, and Petition/Protest. The goal: to have community members understand conceptually and practically the many ways that resistance has occurred, from our desire to be seen and heard through literature and film, to affirming our human rights through the development of social movements and the preservation of our legacies and communities. This goal will be achieved through reading, discussion, debate, and written reflection. In essence, Black resistance is Black existence, and Black existence is Black resistance.



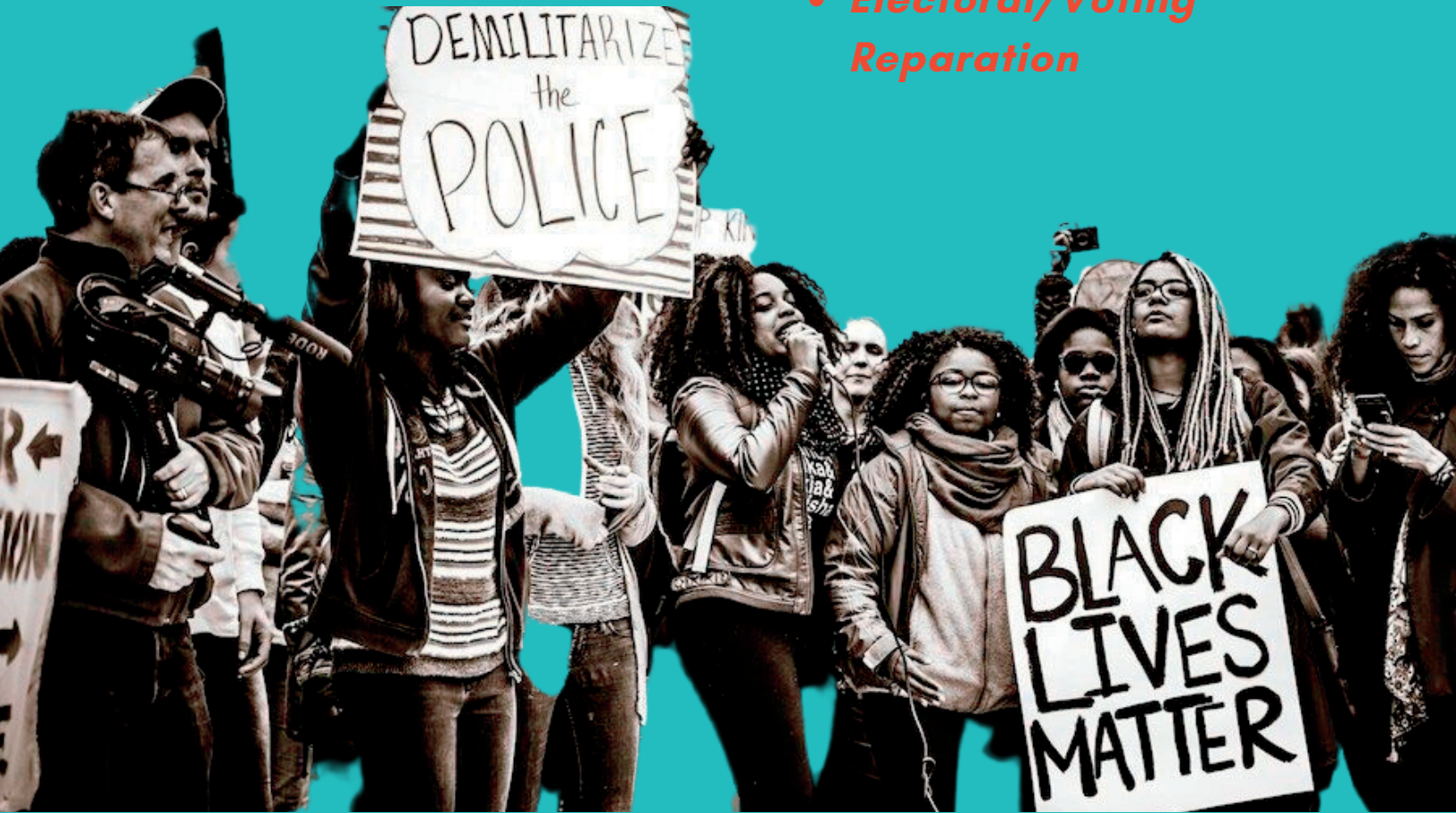
BLACK RESISTANCE

Defiance

- *Strike/Union Organizing*
- *Revolt/Uprising*
- *Revolution*
- *Defy Unjust Laws/Systems*

Petition/Protest

- *Abolition*
- *Write/Study*
- *Institutional Transformation*
- *Electoral/Voting Reparation*



Community Building

- *Land/Healthy/Sustainable Communities*
- *Black Religious Practice*
- *Black Holidays/Memorials*
- *Ubuntu*
- *Mutual Aid*

Psyche Resilience

- *Self Care*
- *Afrofuturism*
- *Cultural Memory/Production*
- *Black Joy*
- *Reinstate/Preserve History*
- *Consciousness*

TOOL #4

BLACK RESISTANCE ACROSS TIME AND SPACE: THE WAYS AND MEANS OF BLACK EXISTENCE

1) **READ** and **SHARE** the **Combahee River Statement**. Have your community members write down a passage that they feel speaks to them. Next, have members share why that passage speaks to them.

2) **SHOW** the following documentary on the Soweto uprising: "**Soweto Uprising: The Story Behind Sam Nzima's Photograph**." Have community members write down their responses to the following prompts:

2a) What were the youth fighting for and why was it so important to them?



2b) Why was it important for the photographer to be there for himself and history?

3) **SHOW** the documentary of Ngugi's discussion of "**Why Africans Hate Their Own Languages**". Have community members write down their thoughts on this. Have they ever thought of this before and do some African Americans "hate" their connection to Africa? Why or why not? Then share and discuss.



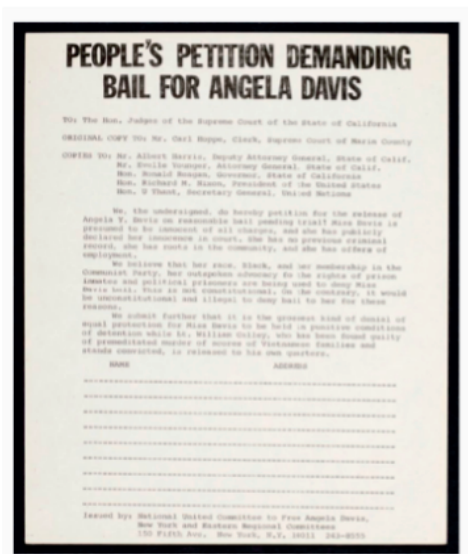
TOOL #4

BLACK RESISTANCE ACROSS TIME AND SPACE: THE WAYS AND MEANS OF BLACK EXISTENCE

4) **SHARE** the definition of **Defiance** in the **Glossary** and look at the various forms of **Defiance** in the **Graphic** on page 37. Have community members think of a specific example of **Defiance** in Black history and share.

5) **SHARE** the definition of **Protest** in the **Glossary** and look at the various forms of **Protest** in the **Graphic** on page 37. Have community members think of a specific example of **Protest** in Black history and share what they were protesting for or against.

6) **SHARE** the definition of **Petition** in the **Glossary** and examine the petition below. Ask community members to think of an issue in their communities that they would draft a petition on and how they might word it in such a way as to get support with signatures.



TOOL #4

BLACK RESISTANCE ACROSS TIME AND SPACE: THE WAYS AND MEANS OF BLACK EXISTENCE

7) **SHARE** the definition of **Community Building** in the **Glossary** and examples of **Community Building** in the **Graphic** on page 37. Ask community members to share examples of Community Building in their neighborhoods.

8) **SHARE** the definition of **Psyche Resilience** in the **Glossary** and in the **Graphic** above and the various ways it shows up. Ask community members why this is so important to Black resistance struggles. Ask them to share examples of how they engage in their own resilience.

NOTES

VISUALIZING ABOLITION:
BARRING FREEDOM EXHIBITION



HISTORY AND STRUCTURES

1) Before we define it, take a moment to think about what it may encompass. What do you already know about the prison industrial complex?

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2) How did this definition of the prison industrial complex differ from or align with your expectations?

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3) Where can you see the PIC in your own community or in recent US politics?

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CARCERAL VISUALITY

1) *Carceral visibility* is possibly not a familiar phrase. Take a moment to make an educated guess at what carceral visibility might mean.

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2) Where do you feel particularly visible? Invisible? In those situations, how do you feel and who holds power?

3) Consider your own experiences with the police. How did you feel during those encounters? What role do you think your race may have played in these encounters? What other factors may have contributed?

4) Do you know where the jails and prisons are in your community? Are they visible or hidden from view? Why do you think that is?

FROM THE INSIDE OUT

1) What images come to mind for you when you hear the word *prisoner*? Why do you think that Emile DeWeaver generally avoids the term?

2) Emile discusses the importance of redistributing power for the system to change. Can you think of other spaces or scenarios where you would like to see power redistributed? What kind of change might that bring about?

3) How do these artworks reflect or challenge your own images of or experiences with the US system of incarceration?

4) This section discusses three artists who use materials from within the prison to make sculptures. Before reading about their practices and reasons, why do you think they might do that?

5) Hank Willis Thomas raises an important question about the ethics of making art about the suffering of others. He ends “Am I worthy? And do I have a choice?” What do you think are the responsibilities of artists (visual artists, writers, musicians, filmmakers, etc.) in regard to stories of oppression and injustice?

ABOLITION FEATURES

1) Pause to consider, what would it mean to abolish prisons? What are the goals of the abolition movement?

2) How did the definition of *abolition* given here differ from or align with your expectations? How do you feel about the propositions being made?

3) Which of these artworks or approaches speaks to you? Why? How does it encourage you to think about our prison system or our society at large?

4) What are the ways you can think of that museums are or have been implicated in systems of oppression and exploitation? How would you imagine museums for an abolitionist future?

RACE, FOREIGN POLICY, AND THE CARCERAL STATE SURVEY

ABOUT YOU...

1) A personal experience or future goal related to race, foreign policy, and the carceral state?

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2) Something special about a grandparent or great-grandparent you would like to share?

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3) What is one connection between foreign and domestic policy, past or present, that you think is important and why?

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4) What role do you think race plays in foreign and domestic policy?

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION...

1) How would you define the carceral state?

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2) What is one connection between foreign and domestic policy, past or present, that you think is important and why?

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3) What role do you think race plays in foreign and domestic policy?

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APPENDIX A:

Resources for Leaders

Scan or click the QR codes for resources

Social Justice 101:

Understanding the Language of Racial Oppression



Social Justice 102:

Understanding the Language of Black Liberation



Social Justice 103:

Understanding the Black Diaspora



Social Justice 104:

Black Resistance Across Time and Space



APPENDIX B:

Additional Resources

Scan the QR codes for resources



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to conclude this report with an acknowledgement of thanks to our grant sponsor, partners, and scholar-activists who contributed to the successful execution of this series. This includes, among others:



DR. LISA BROCK
CURATOR



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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

To learn more about **Social Justice at ASALH**, read updates, and watch videos about the program, scan or click this QR code.



To learn more about the **Howard University Social Justice Consortium** and read updates about the program, scan or click this QR code.



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